

WORKPLACE WISDOM NEWSLETTER

THE THREE LESSONS OF THANKSGIVING

What was the first Thanksgiving like?

When was it...and why?

Are there any lasting lessons?

Can we apply them today?

The first Thanksgiving celebration was in the autumn of 1621. The pilgrims and Wampanoag Indians came together to celebrate with a feast for their harvest. We know there was dancing, singing, games, and feasting. It lasted for three days.

Pondering this upcoming holiday, **I thought of three important aspects of that first harvest feast.** Now, 386 years later, that early celebration has become an annual American tradition. This month many of us will gather with family and friends to eat the traditional turkey dinner.

THAT FIRST CELEBRATION is where I want to focus.

THREE STRONG MESSAGES have been sent to every American.

"What did the Pilgrims do that we can replicate today?"

1. **Build relationships.** *You can't build anything significant ALL BY YOURSELF.*
2. **Work diligently.** *You must DO THE WORK in order to see significant results.*
3. **Celebrate the completion.** *You need to STOP AND CELEBRATE what you've achieved.*

1. Build relationships. *Build them in your personal AND professional life.*

We do not build ALONE. The Pilgrims knew NOTHING of growing their own food. They UNDERSTOOD VERY LITTLE about tending crops --MUCH LESS ABOUT HOW TO HARVEST! The Indians became friends who worked along side of the Pilgrims -- teaching them how to plant, tend, and harvest crops of food. The friendship and partnership with the Indians led to the Pilgrims' ultimate survival in those first early winters.

Do you think YOU can go it alone? Do you think that your success or failure is only up to you? I have written articles on the many situations in which we need one another's skills and talents to accomplish our goals. Husbands need wives; wives need husbands; children need parents; managers need team players; employees need managers; managers need executive leadership. Builders need workers; students need teachers; friends need friends; ministers need a congregation; actors need directors. We ALL need mentors and role models.

Build good relationships EVERYWHERE YOU GO! Be pleasant, helpful, kind, truthful, and courageous with everyone you meet. **You never know WHICH NEW RELATIONSHIP will ultimately make a huge contribution to your life.**

2. Work diligently. *To build a life that is significant, WORK significantly.*

Together, the Indians and Pilgrims WORKED through all of the hot summer months. Just imagine, no machinery. Rough hand-hewn tools were their only assistance in their labor. I imagine, at night, there were many aching backs, many sore joints, and swollen and blistered hands. I imagine that they felt weary at the next day's light of dawn. I imagine there was little time for questioning "whether or not they felt suited to their job" or "if they needed to look for other work that utilized their talent".

We can learn from their example of working through difficult times. They modeled perseverance for us.

Our work today will not be so dreary or so labor intensive. We have tools and co-workers. If we don't have what we need, we buy the right tools or hire the right workers to accomplish our tasks. But what a lesson they taught us! Work until the end is successful! I love it! Work until you succeed! Work it any way that you want, but their demonstration of the "work ethic" is unsurpassed.

WORK DILIGENTLY! Work through physical pain, lean budgets, inept team members, and headcount reduction.

3. Celebrate. *With great success, comes great joy!*

That first feast in 1612 was full of fun, joy, and friendship. Each person had to be superbly happy to see their accomplishments...and to know their food supply for the winter was secured. Their hard work had ended with a bountiful harvest and a respected relationship with their new friends, the Wampanoag Indians, was only just beginning. We know there was dancing, singing, storytelling, and feasting as part of their celebration. The Pilgrims celebrated the results of their hard work. The harvest was a lifesaving and significant end to their labor.

Celebration was the next step. **When you complete a significant project or even finish a challenging task, what are your feelings?** Relief? Pride? Pleasure? Of course!!! Then, it makes sense to take time to celebrate. Reward yourself or your team with a designated time to enjoy the "harvest" of your labor.

Too often, we move quickly from job to job.....task to task....project to project. Stop! Relish in "the job well done". Recognize it and be thankful for your results.

Find a friend (friends) with whom to celebrate with a feast, a party, a luncheon, or at least, a rousing "hurrah".

Are you a workaholic? Learn the "*stop-and-celebrate*" lesson from the hardworking Pilgrims.

Think about these "Three Lessons" the Pilgrims demonstrated.

- 1. Build trustworthy relationships.** *Don't "go it alone".*
- 2. Work hard.** *Finish strong.*
- 3. Celebrate your successes.** *After the labor, find the joy.*

**Have a wonderful Thanksgiving.
And give thanks for all you have....**

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